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ABSTRACT

Schools in San Antonio, Texas, need to make changes to make life work better for San Antonio's students, to improve their learning, and to help them become happier and more productive students. Schools must take children where they are and work with their circumstances. San Antonio is failing to provide students with the learning and development they need for numerous reasons, one being a lack of agreement on goals and purposes. This report addresses the problems by providing a framework for developing new goals and new visions; for pooling community resources in an effort to work together; for creating an array of new social contracts across the community that will sustain reform; and for reinventing the school and its work. Listed are 11 design principles for teaching and learning smart in schools. Examples of the design principles are authentic assessment, and cooperative learning. Additionally, seven design principles for school governance and leadership are: (1) school-based governance; (2) smart leadership; (3) functional schools, enduring relationships; (4) enhancing professionalism; (5) choice, diversity, and accountability; (6) school-communities; and (7) community service centers. (Author/KDP)

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SMART SCHOOLS FOR SAN ANTONIO'S FUTURE

Center for Educational Leadership
TRINITY UNIVERSITY
San Antonio, Texas

EA-025641

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SMART SCHOOLS FOR SAN ANTONIO'S FUTURE

A Report on Public Education

Center for Educational Leadership
TRINITY UNIVERSITY
San Antonio, Texas

The Center for Educational Leadership combines the resources of 15 school districts, community service agencies, business and corporate sponsors, municipal government, and Trinity University to form a comprehensive university-public school collaborative directed at improving schools in our community. The purposes of the Center are to provide a cross-district and university-school forum directed at studying the issues affecting quality education, and engaging in cross-district school improvement projects.

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The Senior Fellows are comprised of 15 superintendents of Bexar County school districts, community, civic and government leaders, nationally recognized experts, and Trinity University faculty and administration. The Senior Fellows are responsible for providing leadership to the Center, and developing cross-district strategies for school improvement in greater San Antonio.

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The Trinity Partners comprise a network of 40 senior level and highly accomplished school leaders sponsored by their school districts. The Partners work together to improve their capacities as leaders and develop school improvement projects. The goal of the Partners is to have in place 30 to 40 school improvement initiatives in area schools every two years.

The San Antonio Community

Texas, U.S.A.

Dear San Antonio:

Celia was born yesterday. At three and one-half pounds she is dangerously underweight. The potato chip and cola diet and two-pack-a-day smoking habit of her 14-year-old mother has had a telling effect. It will be rough going during the preschool years unless Celia's mother gets some help. Celia's early school years are not likely to be much better either.

Michael and Martha are the 27-year-old parents of two preschool children that they love very much. Both high school dropouts, Michael and Martha hold down three minimum pay jobs between them to make ends meet. Child care is a problem since Martha's mother died. The woman next door helps and sometimes the children are left at a crowded day care cooperative. In both cases the care provided is little more than "babysitting." The children watch TV continuously at home. Their social and language skills are seriously underdeveloped. Michael and Martha feel guilty about not being able to spend much time with their children and are unsure about how to use the time they have.

Across town 11-year-old Jeff spends more and more time alone. He has few friends at school and passes his days and evenings in his room watching television. His 15-year-old sister Barbara has just joined a girls' gang that is connected to the most popular boys' gang at the high school. She has been sick for two days after drinking herself unconscious as part of the initiation rites. Sexually active for four months she worries about getting pregnant. Until last year she really liked school and worked hard to do well. Now school is little more than the place to be. Jeff's dad has a rewarding but demanding career that takes up most of his time. His mother is a health club addict, avid bridge player, and very active in the local social scene. Both

Jeff and his sister have confided that they wish their parents were around more and stricter with them. In his sister's words, "It's too hard to say no to friends and having a mom and dad's no as an excuse is one way to resist pressure from friends."

The good news is that not every home in San Antonio is troubled. Some preschoolers come from homes filled with books, have grandparents and older siblings who read to them, take trips to the country or visit the zoo, and when they attend day care or preschool they experience something that is anything but a warehouse for children. Their mothers took care of themselves during pregnancy. They can count on a nutritious if not fancy meal. They're not afraid. And similarly, some teenagers find themselves in homes that provide the love, support, guidance and discipline they need and dearly want. What some enjoy must become available to all of San Antonio's children.

This is a report about the schools we need to make life work better for San Antonio's students, to improve their learning, and to help them become happier and more productive students. We begin with a basic premise. Schools must take children where they are and work with the circumstances that they are in. This premise summarizes the challenge we face as school administrators. No excuses! The corollary to this premise is equally basic. The job will be done more quickly, more easily, more effectively, and at less cost for everyone if we accept the reality that school problems and family problems cannot be separated. As a community we must marshal our will and resources to improve both. In this report we describe the problems all of us face, challenge you to respond and challenge ourselves to make a new commitment to excellence.

Sincerely,

The Center for Educational Leadership

March, 1992

SMART SCHOOLS
FOR SAN ANTONIO'S
FUTURE

SMART SCHOOLS
FOR SAN ANTONIO'S FUTURE



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NEXT STEPS

Leadership density is key if San Antonio and its schools are to become second to none. At the top, community leadership is aware of the problems we face and understands the directions that must be taken. The various America 2000 initiatives and Texas School Partnership are examples of important steps in the right direction. But translating good intentions to helpful actions requires that leadership be developed much deeper in our community than is now the case. San Antonio has many virtues. It is known as the friendly city, the River City, and the Alamo City. It is a retirement paradise, a military town, a key international commercial center, a medical center, and the top tourist attraction in Texas. These assets are important but they are not enough to carry San Antonio into the next century as a world class city. Let San Antonio be known as the American city that puts its children and families first. When San Antonio puts children and families first it is making the best investment it can in its future. And, putting children and families first is also the right thing to do.

From birth to age 18 San Antonio's youth spend about nine percent of their time in schools. The remaining 91 percent is spent at home, on the streets, and in employment. As a community we are not doing as well as we can in providing for the learning and development of our children either in or out of school. We attribute this to four interconnected reasons. As we look deep into our community there is:

- lack of agreement on goals and purposes
- failure to appreciate and understand the systemic nature of school problems
- widespread complacency, even indifference
- failure to differentiate between changes directed to improving the present system of schooling and reinventing the system

This report addresses the problems by providing a framework for developing new goals and new visions; for pooling community resources in an effort to work together; for creating an array of new social contracts across our community that will sustain reform; and for reinventing the school and its work.

*Let San Antonio be
known as the
American city that
puts its children
and families first.*

NEW GOALS, NEW VISIONS

American Education Goals

We endorse the goals for America proposed by the Presidentially-appointed National Goals Panel. Further, though what happens outside of the school makes an important difference in student learning and development, we believe that the schools must accept the lion's share of responsibility for achieving all six of the goals.

By the year 2000:

1. All children in America will start school ready to learn.
2. The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.
3. American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter (including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography) and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well so that they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern world.
4. U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.
5. Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
6. Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

Goal three defines the core content to be learned. Achieving this goal requires that schools provide a rigorous and challenging academic curriculum for all of our students. Less clear are the levels of competency and skills that must be developed as this content is mastered. Students must not only know but know how to reason as well.

San Antonio must become a city that thinks for a living. Schools must work together with other agencies to transform San Antonio into a learning society. Our economic future depends on accomplishing this goal. We want to be clear that we value an array of commitments to the good life: clean air, a renaissance in the arts, safe and peaceful neighborhoods, democratic citizenship, social justice for all of our citizens, stable family living, good health and personal self actualization. But we recognize accomplishing these goals depends largely on San Antonio's ability to achieve economic security and prosperity for all of its citizens.

Competence and skill in reasoning means the ability to use knowledge to solve problems and the ability to create new knowledge when existing knowledge is not adequate. In tomorrow's world the capacity for problem solving will require not only verbal and mathematical communications skills but the ability to use technology and

information effectively and the ability to work cooperatively and profitably in team settings. Accumulating knowledge, developing the ability to use knowledge effectively, and learning how to work with others productively comprise essential workplace know-how for tomorrow's employment.

The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) states that "workplace know-how" consists of two elements: foundation skills and competencies that are at the core of successful job performance.

They propose three foundation skills. Basic skills such as the ability to read, write, perform arithmetic and mathematical operations, and listen and speak effectively; thinking skills, such as the ability to think creatively, make decisions, solve problems, visualize and know how to learn; and personal qualities, such as displaying responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity and honesty. They propose five broad competencies areas.

Resources. The ability to identify, organize, plan, and allocate resources such as time, money, materials and people.

Interpersonal skills. The ability to work effectively with others, as for example to participate as a member of a team, teach others new skills, serve clients or customers, exercise leadership, negotiate, and work with diverse people.

Information. The ability to acquire, evaluate, interpret and communicate information as well as to use computers to process information.

Systems. The ability to understand complex interrelationships.

Technology. The ability to select appropriate technologies or tools, apply technology to a task, and the ability to solve problems when things go wrong.

Adapted from: *What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for America 2000*, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC, 1991.

Also less clear in goal three are the attitudes and dispositions that need to be developed in all students about the nature of learning, the nature of work, and the nature of life itself. It is at best a shallow victory if we prepare students who are competent academically but who are unable or unwilling to function as productive family members, citizens and employees. These latter outcomes are critical as the schools seek to prepare the next generation of San Antonio's citizens. Attitudes and dispositions about learning and work include such traditional virtues as honesty, tolerance, self directedness and persistence. To this list we add adaptability, initiative, responsibility, pride in work, tolerance for diversity, and service to others.

In the past, all that was expected of the school was to ensure student content mastery. Our present school structures, curriculum designs, methods of organizing for instruction, schedules and time frames, methods of teaching and assessment

NEW GOALS, NEW VISIONS

Foundation Skills and Competencies

*It is at best a shallow
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and employees.*

NEW GOALS, NEW VISIONS

systems were designed for this purpose. Content mastery remains important. But alone it is an inadequate definer of learning outcomes for tomorrow's graduates of San Antonio's schools. A more complete definition of learning outcomes must include the ability to use knowledge, to solve problems and to create new knowledge and the development of such attitudes and dispositions as moral character, appreciation of diversity, and good work habits. Expanded learning outcomes for schools will not be readily achieved without developing community wide strategies for addressing family and school problems, new social contracts across our community to sustain reforms, and new designs for schooling.

READY TO LEARN

The schools must accept students as they are and accept the challenge to educate them well. But reason suggests that the job would be better done at much less cost if students came to school ready to learn. Thus, among America's education goals none is more important than the first: "All children in America will start school ready to learn." For this to happen every child in San Antonio must be born healthy, be properly fed and clothed, have access to proper medical care, live in a safe and nurturing environment, and have access to quality formal and informal childhood experiences during the first five years.

Remediation Costs Drain Resources

Remediation costs in money, time and other resources for students not ready to learn ripple throughout the entire school system robbing resources that might otherwise be used for enrichment and enhancement. Further, remediation costs drain resources from non-school social service and other agencies. Over time some remediation costs become problem solving costs. Students who do not experience success in school are more likely to drop out, to become discipline problems, and to require expensive special educational arrangements. Time and money spent on achieving goal one is in the long run the most cost effective investment that San Antonio can make in its schools.

School problems, in other words, are systemic and solving them requires systemic strategies.

What happens to students outside of school matters. School problems, in other words, are systemic and solving them requires systemic strategies. A recent study by the National Commission on Children concludes that most American families want to do more for their children. Despite this desire, the study notes that at every age and for all races and income groups there are children in families whose lives are neither easy nor secure. Parents at all income levels, for example, express dissatisfaction with the limited amount of time they have for their children. Time pressures and other stresses often leave parents too distracted or drained to provide the needed nurturing and support structure for children. Poverty compounds these problems as does living in unsafe neighborhoods.

Forty percent of the children age 10 to 17 who were surveyed by the National Commission on Children reported wishing their parents were stricter with them or

more attentive. All in all, the National Commission concluded that two parent families provided the best environment for children. Single parenthood was hard on both parents and kids. Single parents, for example, were less likely to consider their neighborhoods to be excellent or good places to raise their children and were generally two times more likely to worry that their teenage children would be physically attacked, would become involved in selling drugs, would become pregnant or get a girl pregnant, would drop out of school, or would be unable to find a good job upon completing school than were married parents.

☞ Parents need to be kept strong so that they can have the energy to demonstrate the love that we know they have for their children. The hopes and dreams that they have for their children need to be realized. Many may have lost the hopes and dreams for themselves - but I can assure you, they have not lost them for their children.

— Gloria Rodriguez, *Avance, Inc.*

Not surprisingly, minority parents worried the most. African-American parents, for example, were one and a half to three times as likely as white parents to report being worried about their teenagers engaging in unsafe or dangerous activities, getting into trouble, or being harmed by someone else. Hispanic parents were five to ten times as likely as white parents to express extreme levels of fear and anxiety, and twice as likely as African-American parents. Half of all the Hispanic parents surveyed reported that they worried a great deal that their teenage son or daughter would sell drugs, use alcohol, ride in a car with a drunk driver, get pregnant or get a girl pregnant, or get AIDS. Sixty percent of these parents worried a great deal that their son or daughter would be shot.

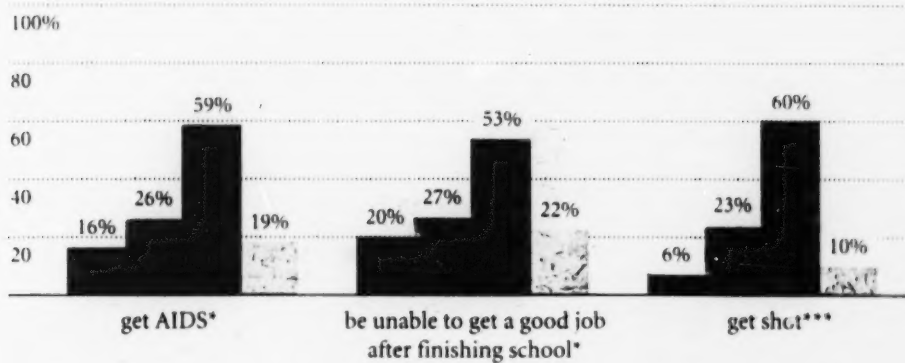
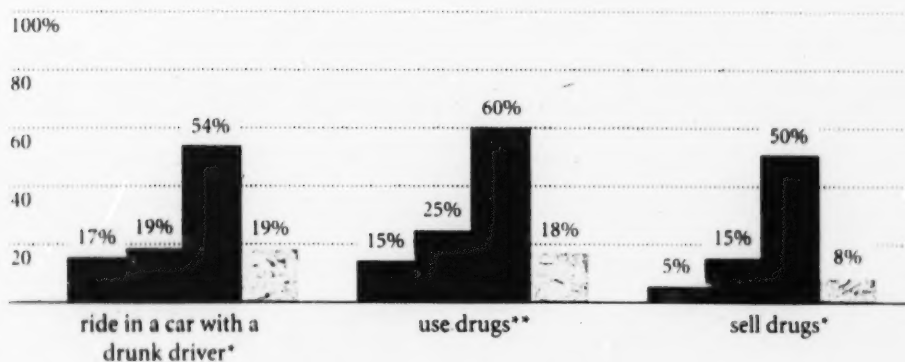
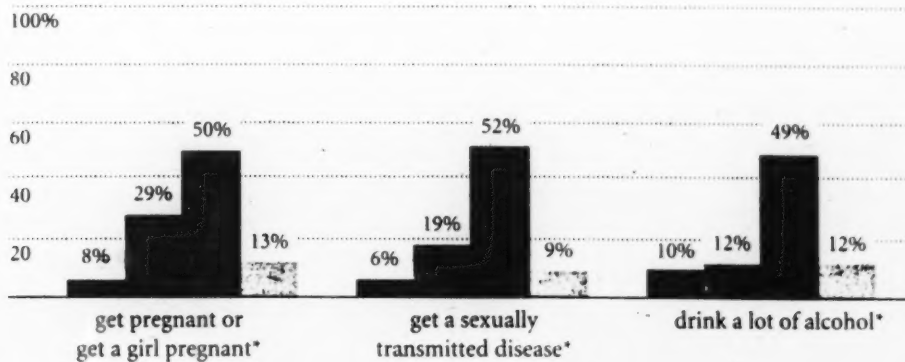
READY TO LEARN

Hopes and Dreams

*The goal of
helping families
function better
must become San
Antonio's highest
priority.*

READY TO LEARN

Percentage of Parents, by Race or Ethnic Background, Who Worry "a Lot" That Their Child Will:



White
 Black
 Hispanic
 All

* Asked of parents whose children are age 14-17

** Asked of parents whose children are age 10-17

*** Asked of parents whose children are age 0-17

Problems in family life exist not only at the preschool, primary and elementary school levels but the middle and high school levels as well. Further, though problems facing youth in San Antonio are related to social and economic status they are not simply a function of this status. Middle class families and upper class families too are faced with increasingly alienated children, drug and alcohol abuse, pregnancy and gang problems. They too struggle with problems of family stress and disunity.

San Antonio has one of the nation's highest rates of teen pregnancy, particularly for teen-agers 14 years old and younger.

Too often and in increasing numbers, children are born to children. A mother of 13 or 14 will have few parenting skills—and she will face a greater than average likelihood of having to rear the child without its father. A teen father who does decide to become a part of a young family is not likely to have such skills either. In addition, economic pressures are greater. Young teen parents will not have completed their education, and job prospects will be bleak.

Teens sometimes glamorize parenthood, seeking from a baby the love and affirmation that they have not found in their home or school. Others get pregnant simply from ignorance about sex. They suddenly have great responsibilities at the very time they should be developing socially and educationally. Their children may face hardship and neglect, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and unmet needs.

From: "For the Children-City Must Ensure that Youngsters Grow Up Healthy, Educated," *San Antonio Light*, January 5, 1992.

We are convinced that runaway pregnancy rates among teenagers and escalating gang activity can be traced back to youngsters searching for something that families and communities once provided. Schools must accept their share of responsibility for providing the kind of environments and conditions that can help compensate for the unwillingness or the inability of families to function properly. Much can be done, for example, to provide compensating conditions at school. The smart schools we propose for San Antonio in later sections of this report seek to do just that.

What else must be done? The goal of helping families function better must become San Antonio's highest priority. As a community we must not only help families provide their children with such basics as food, clothing, shelter and health care but with adult supervision. With two out of three married mothers and even a higher percentage of unmarried mothers working, the need for quality child care in our community has reached crisis proportions. Day care centers must become common not only in schools but in places of employment. The school day must be extended to provide an array of "after school" academic, extramural and social experiences for students in all grades from kindergarten through twelve. Churches, recreational groups and other community sectors must join the school in ensuring that students do not become "latchkey" for want of alternatives. -

READY TO LEARN

Teen Pregnancy and the Cycle of Poverty

*The Remarkable
Achievement of
Indo-Chinese
Boat Children*

☛ A new study reveals that after only being in the United States for an average of three and a half years children of Indo-Chinese refugee families (the boat people of the late 1970s and early 1980s) have achieved remarkably in schools. The children attended schools in low-income neighborhoods in Orange County, California, Seattle, Houston, Chicago and Boston. How is it that these students are successful in the same schools where so many other students routinely fail? The researchers offer some clues:

The family is the central institution...within which and through which achievement and knowledge are accomplished.... Parents and children honor mutual, collective obligations to one another and their relatives. They strive to attain respect, cooperation and harmony within the family.

During high school, Indo-Chinese students spend an average of three hours and ten minutes per day; in junior high an average of two and a half hours; and in grade school, an average of two hours and five minutes [on homework].

Homework clearly dominates household activities during weekdays. Although the parents' lack of education and facility with English often prevent them from...[helping directly with homework] they set standards and goals for the evening and facilitate their children's studies by assuming responsibility for chores and other practical considerations.

After dinner, the table is cleared, and homework begins. The older children, both male and female, help their younger siblings. Indeed, they seem to learn as much from teaching as from being taught.

Source: Nathan Kaplon, Marcella H. Choy and John K. Whitmore, "Indo-Chinese Refugee Families and Academic Achievement," *Scientific American*, February 1992, pp. 36-42.)

A massive effort needs to be launched to help educate parents who may not know what to do for their children. New partnerships must be created between schools and parents. Key to the success of such partnerships is that they be reciprocal. We believe that parents need schools to help them function better. At the same time we believe that schools need parents to help them function better.

Families fail for many reasons. Sometimes they fail despite heroic efforts by parents. When families fail kids sometimes withdraw inward, hardening their shells and insulating themselves from the outside. But more often kids seek to create their own "families" by turning to each other for support. Gangs, for example, provide the security, affection and sense of belonging missing from other sources. Norms too are important to young people, particularly to adolescents. In schools powerful and extensive norms systems develop that comprise a student subculture. Like any other culture these norms dictate not only how students should dress and the latest colloquial language and other seemingly harmless rituals of school life but how students should think, what they are to value and believe, and their behavior. As the student subculture strengthens it influences what students think, believe and do, not only about their studies but about gang memberships, sex, alcohol and drug use. A growing student subculture can come to dominate the legitimate culture of the school. When this happens parents, teachers and administrators lose control. Impersonality and size are enemies of the legitimate school culture and friends of the student subculture.

When Families Fail

San Antonio must commit itself to broad based community support for learning. Libraries, museums, universities, civic organizations, volunteer groups, businesses, and other institutions have important roles to play in supporting families, in supporting young people, in supporting learning.

Becoming the American city that puts children and families first and reinventing schools requires that we develop new social contracts across our community to sustain our efforts and ensure success. Social contracts represent reciprocal commitments that detail responsibilities and expectations between and among various groups.

NEW SOCIAL CONTRACTS

New social contracts can help to overcome complacency and indifference. Despite often valiant efforts from many individuals and groups in our community, and despite a sense of what must be done in the leadership of San Antonio, complacency and indifference remain widespread in our community. Students are often complacent or indifferent about their studies. Teachers are often complacent or indifferent about the students they teach and teaching itself. Parents are often complacent or indifferent about their children and the lives they lead in and out of schools. Not enough citizens who do not have children in schools take an interest. Corporations and businesses often bring narrow self serving agendas to the table. The law enforcement community, churches, social service agencies, the media, the universities, the entertainment community, the arts community, and virtually every other sector of San Antonio community life too must share some of the blame of complacency and indifference. As school leaders we have sometimes made matters

NEW SOCIAL CONTRACTS

worse by confounding our own complacency with smugness.

If San Antonio is to become known as the American city that puts families and children first and if our schools are to become learning communities that provide students with world class educational experiences then we believe that:

Parents must take greater interest in their children, raise their expectations for their children's achievement and behavior, and accept more responsibility for what their children do not only in their early years but through the high school years.

Employers throughout San Antonio must develop family-friendly and school-friendly policies that encourage and reward their employees to participate more fully in school affairs.

Businesses must adopt hiring practices that discourage students from working long hours or late hours and that encourage good student performance.

The religious community must provide a coordinated leadership role in focusing attention on families, children and schools.

The newspapers, radio stations and television stations must join together in re-evaluating their commitments and to use the power of their respective media to help promote and strengthen family life, and to provide learning opportunities for preschoolers and students throughout the school years.

The medical community must re-evaluate its commitment to family life and schooling and make available its rich reservoir of laboratories, scientific apparatus, and human resources for this purpose.

Municipal government through all of its agencies must take the lead in rededicating its purposes, in marshalling resources and in coordinating community efforts.

United Way and other social service agencies must place children, families and schools at the center of their work regardless of their specific mission.

Professional organizations, groups such as the American Association of Retired Persons, neighborhood associations, social and civic clubs, and other community entities all have roles to play in this effort.

New social contracts mean new challenges for everyone. Challenges that affirm belief that education counts; that testify to the value of education in its own right; and that recognize education as the means to achieve economic security and responsible citizenship.

Our Challenge

☞ We challenge parents to develop routines that allow for study time; to regulate television watching; to set hours for their children; to know their children's friends. We challenge parents to spend more time with their children.

☞ We challenge corporations and businesses to value education by supporting day care for their employees, by developing flexible work schedules that support family life, by providing paid release time for employees to visit their children's schools and for other school related volunteer work, and by providing incentives to encourage them to take advantage of these options.

☞ We challenge local television stations to value education by each providing special daily programming devoted to the educational needs of preschoolers. We challenge them to provide additional daily programming devoted to the educational, developmental and social needs of students enrolled in kindergarten through grade twelve. We challenge them to broadcast family and learning friendly public service announcements during prime time viewing hours reminding parents to check their students' homework and asking parents if they know where their children are. We challenge them to consider carefully the quality of all of the programming that they offer in light of San Antonio's commitment to place family and children first and to develop world class schools.

☞ We challenge local radio stations to value education by monitoring more carefully the programs they now offer and by developing more family-friendly and school-friendly programming.

☞ We challenge businesses to value education by adopting school attendance, teacher recommendations, and student performance as non-negotiable selection criteria when hiring school age children.

☞ We challenge our physicians and other health care professionals to value education by giving significant amounts of time to community and school service. We challenge them to work towards the development of health care clinics and counseling centers where needed in our community and to voluntarily staff them. We challenge them to accept mentoring and teaching assignments in our schools.

☞ We challenge our churches, temples and other places of worship to value education by pooling their resources and by expanding their boundaries to make a unified and coordinated commitment to serve young people throughout the community of San Antonio.

☞ We challenge preschool day care, adult and continuing education, higher education and other educational providers to share their talents and to devote a significant amount of their resources to the broad problems of family life and schooling in our community.

☞ We challenge every citizen of San Antonio who is able to do so from every sector of our community to value education by giving one week of voluntary service per year to the schools. We challenge them to donate their carpentry, accounting and gardening skills, travel experiences, and work know-how. We challenge them to organize camping trips, join reading groups, share their workplaces—to say and show they care.

NEW SOCIAL CONTRACTS

We do not offer challenges to others lightly. We too must challenge ourselves to think differently, to give more, and to create new social contracts that redefine our work. Teachers must be prepared to accept the obligations and responsibilities as well as the rewards of professionalism. They must commit themselves to practice in exemplary ways, to stay at the cutting edge of their craft, to see themselves as not just responsible for competent teaching but for student learning, to the idea that every student can learn and that difficulties in learning are problems to be solved, not conditions to be accepted. They must accept responsibility for the practice of teaching that takes place in their schools and in the community at large. And they must commit themselves to the most important hallmark of being a professional, the ethic of caring. For us to succeed, a oneness must be created between school and community. Teachers must help to create this oneness.

As school administrators we must be prepared to ask more of ourselves. We must value teachers and their judgment as never before. We must commit ourselves to sharing more fully with teachers responsibility for school success. Our roles must change from telling, directing and controlling to pointing the way and providing support. Our job is to help teachers be more successful as they teach and to provide them with the needed resources and support to get the job done. We must dismantle the management controls that now get in the way. We must reinvent schools to make them smarter places for both teachers and students.

DEVELOPING SMART SCHOOLS

The "Smart Machine" Concept

Technology has given us the concept of the "smart machine"—one that, instead of simply repeating the same operation over and over in rote fashion, is capable of receiving new information and altering its actions accordingly. The emerging global economy requires workers who are "smart" in the same sense: workers who can analyze new situations, come up with creative solutions, and take responsibility for decisions relating to the performance of their jobs. The functioning of a modern day democracy requires citizens with similar skills, and to produce "smart" workers and "smart" citizens we need "smart" schools and "smart" kids.

From Edward B. Fiske, *Smart Schools, Smart Kids*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991.

As goals and visions change, schools must change. New goals and visions for San Antonio cannot be achieved in schools that were designed for more limited purposes. As problems change, solutions must change. Solutions to systemic problems will not work in schools that were designed to tell teachers, parents and others what to do. In short, yesterday's schools will not work for today's solutions. The school itself must be reinvented from top to bottom. It must become smarter in how it engages in teaching and learning and it must become smarter in how it governs itself.

In the end, the success of any school improvement initiative depends upon the depth of community leadership that exists within each of San Antonio's school districts. Our school boards, as representatives of the people, have important roles to

play in rallying this leadership locally and in connecting this leadership to broader community initiatives. Below we provide design principles for smart schools. We know how to create smart schools. Each of the principles is now being implemented somewhere within San Antonio's schools. But what is now the exception must become the rule.

1. Augmented teaching and learning for all students.

In smart schools the less ready to learn is a student, the more enriched will learning experiences be. Augmented teaching and learning both speeds up and enriches the experiences that students have. In today's schools this approach is reserved for special programs provided to the gifted and talented. The conventional wisdom is that the less ready is a child to learn the more rote, routine, and simplified should learning experiences be. Thus students having difficulty get a more structured and watered down curriculum that emphasizes drill and recitation. Average students get something in between. We advocate augmented teaching and learning for all students—learning that relies on primary source material, active involvement of students, problem solving, the use of apparatus, field trips, discovery, high levels of mastery, and demonstrated performance.

2. Authentic assessment.

Smart schools use authentic assessment that more accurately identifies what students know. Schools must demand levels of mastery which ensure not just accumulation of knowledge but understanding and ability to use this knowledge. Further, students must be assessed against absolute standards of performance rather than being compared with other students somewhere else. There is little cheer, for example, in learning that San Antonio students achieve about as well as those in Midland or Boston when no one is doing very well. Assessing understanding and ability to use as well as accumulate knowledge means relying on student performance exhibitions such as video portfolios, debates, writing and reasoning samples, examples of research, and other accumulations of real evidence of what is and is not learned. Authentic assessment addresses issues and outcomes that the school and its community think are important.

3. Cooperative learning settings.

Smart schools rethink the balance between competition and cooperation and emphasize more cooperative learning settings that help every student become a winner. The benefits of competition remain one of America's greatest myths, a lesson that corporate America has learned and learned well. Though still valuing competition with other companies, competition within the organization has been relegated to the company softball league. Success in every sector of our economy and success in life itself requires that people learn to work together, to share insights and to build on the fortunes of others. The building of bridges, the retooling of factories

DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SMART SCHOOLS

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DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SMART SCHOOLS

and the invention of medical cures in today's world are not so much the result of individual inventive genius as the bringing together of competent and motivated interdisciplinary teams. Yet when it comes to learning, today's schools still favor old fashioned competition. Students work alone, team problem solving is rare, and helping one another is often equated with cheating. Some students must win and others must lose.

4. Interdisciplinary teaching.

Smart schools strive to organize subject matter around problems. Teaching is often interdisciplinary without sacrificing integrity of the disciplines. Whatever the problem, be it pollution, teenage pregnancy, attracting industry to our community, designing a mass transit rail system, in the real world solutions invariably require the bringing together of insights and understandings from a variety of disciplines. Solving problems in the real world is not a matter of simply applying knowledge but of putting knowledge from a variety of sources together, to create new relationships, new ways of thinking, new solutions. In today's schools the curriculum is organized by subjects. History is studied as history separate from environment. Science is studied as science separate from history. Both are studied separate from literature and mathematics. Rarely are the various subjects brought together.

5. Functional schedules and time frames.

In smart schools, form follows function. Teaching schedules and time frames for learning are dictated by what teachers and principals are trying to accomplish and emerge from the day by day assessments and decisions that they make about teaching and learning. Teachers may, for example, decide to meet with students in large blocks of time for some learning objectives. On other occasions students might be working individually or in teams on research projects without worrying about preset scheduling interruptions. In today's schools function too often follows form. Teaching schedules and time frames for learning are typically set first, set uniformly and set from a distance. The high school day, for example, is organized into 55 minute periods. When bells ring classes change whether or not teacher and students are ready. Subject matter is organized into "sound bytes" that fit the schedule rather than forms that facilitate mastery learning.

6. Core curriculum studies.

Smart schools make clear choices about what students will learn, identify a curriculum considered to be essential and then focus on mastery of this more concentrated curriculum. In today's schools the curriculum is defined by 247 pages of "essential" elements provided by the state that purport to comprise a balanced educational program. As a result the emphasis is on coverage rather than indepth learning. Teachers teach a little about a lot and students wind up with snippets of learning about many things. Little time is available for indepth mastery of anything.

7. One standard.

Smart schools make no differentiation in standards. Instead a common and challenging core of studies and a common standard is identified for all students. Smart schools teach fewer, more important things better. Within the framework of a common core of studies students are allowed informed curriculum choices. Students are able to concentrate a portion of their studies in areas that interest them and that complement their strengths. Some students may concentrate in science, others in the performing arts or perhaps computer science. Whatever any student studies is studied with integrity and with mastery as the goal. Placing students into slow, average and gifted classes and programs is a common practice in today's schools. Different tracks mean different expectations for what students should learn and different standards of mastery.

8. Commitment to technology.

Smart schools know how to use technology. Computers, laser discs, telecommunication devices and other artifacts of technology are not just more efficient ways to deliver instruction but tools that students use to learn together and to solve problems. In smart schools technology is not restricted to a special room but becomes a part of the intellectual life of every classroom. Further, computers and other artifacts of technology become tools used by teachers and principals to store portfolio results, share ideas with colleagues, and create innovative teaching and learning materials. On the surface it appears that schools have embraced the use of computers and other technical devices. Equipment inventory sheets, for example, reveal that computers are there and often in numbers. But too often technology is used to help schools do what they have always done only to do it better. Computers are viewed as fast track textbooks and workbooks that help students learn more.

9. Extended school year.

Smart schools recognize that time is a valuable resource. Thus they seek to increase quality time, both for student learning and for planning and reflecting by teachers. Some current experiments in year round schooling distribute the teaching days in nontraditional ways but smart schools go beyond that modification to extend the school year for all students and to build time into the calendar throughout the year for teachers to engage in research, evaluation, reflection, planning, curriculum development, and staff development. Reinventing schools is a complex task; it can't happen without providing time for teachers and principals first to create America's new schools in their minds.

10. Students work, teachers lead.

In smart schools teachers teach by leading and students learn by working. Teachers carefully plan the learning environment, stage problems to be solved, bring

DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SMART SCHOOLS

together examples of learning materials, organize students for learning and guide the process. Smart schools believe that students must accept more responsibility for their own learning than is now the case by engaging in research, developing projects, and using primary source materials rather than just textbooks. Further, students need to be held accountable for convincing teachers that they have learned and qualify for passing and graduating. This is in contrast to the conventional wisdom that expects teachers to do the work of learning for students by making all of the assignments, providing the specific material to be learned, arranging all other details and then teaching directly. In this system students make few decisions about learning but are simply expected to follow directions.

11. Commitment to public service.

In smart schools active engagement in the real world, individual initiative, problem solving, responsibility, and the ideal of service are important. Smart schools require students to participate in public service projects. Such projects might include volunteer work in elementary schools, hospitals, social service agencies and retirement homes, public service, and engaging in community development research. In today's schools little is done to establish a sense of community and to provide students with opportunities for active community involvement.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

1. School based governance.

Smart schools have control over their own purposes and have the authority to make the decisions necessary to achieve these purposes. Within the framework outlined earlier in this report smart schools set their own goals, develop their own curriculum, organize themselves accordingly, and go to work. They decide how to spend money allotted to them and have a major say in hiring teachers. They develop a shared governance structure that involves parents and teachers. They are accountable for providing compelling evidence that they are accomplishing what they set out to accomplish. In smart schools, school based governance and shared decision making are not viewed as ends in themselves but as the means to make better decisions about teaching and learning.

2. Smart leadership.

In smart schools leadership is based on shared ideas and commitments. Smart schools design what they do and why they do it from their purposes, values and beliefs. This idea structure becomes the source of authority for what is done in the school. It represents a covenant that binds people together in a common commitment. In today's schools, by contrast, authority for leadership is based on one's place in the school hierarchy, on rules and regulations, and on the force of a leader's personality.

3. Functional schools, enduring relationships and stable environments.

Smart schools provide students of all ages with opportunities to build long term connections with others, to feel safe and counted in a caring environment. Smart schools are organized functionally around goals and purposes rather than bricks and mortar allowing for several small independent schools to flourish side by side within the same building. Smart schools encourage arrangements that allow teachers and students to stay together for more than one year. They constantly search for ways to build intimate learning communities that provide places for students to create learning friendly student subcultures on the one hand and that compensate for faltering family structures on the other. Smart schools get smarter as they get smaller.

4. Enhancing professionalism.

Smart schools understand the value of enhancing the profession of teaching. They challenge teachers to accept the mantle of professionalism by asking for their commitment to practice in exemplary ways, to take charge of their own professional development and that of their colleagues, to accept responsibility for school success and to commit themselves totally to the ethic of caring, treating students and parents as persons to be served rather than cases to be handled. As professionalism grows teachers become increasingly self-managing, thus freeing administrators to give prime attention to teaching and learning rather than to monitoring and controlling. Smart schools recognize that for professionalism to flourish teachers need to be treated as professionals and regarded as valued partners in decisionmaking. Their conditions of work must be improved. They must have much more control over their work than is now the case. They must be free from fixed schedules and the rigid pacing that now characterizes their work day and they must have the resources they need to function effectively. In short, we must expect more from teachers than is now the case and in return we must give more than is now the case.

5. Choice, diversity and accountability.

Smart schools thrive under conditions of controlled choice—conditions which seek to give parents and students access to desired options within a school or school system. In a sense, every school must become a school of choice by accurately interpreting the needs and desires of its community and deliberately shaping itself toward those ends. This approach to choice makes sense for two reasons: Choice encourages schools to be different, and in a diverse society such as ours schools should be different. This point is often missed when standards and standardization are thought to be the same thing. If anything, they are often contradictory. The more alike we require schools to be the more likely that quality will suffer. Choice also creates a sense of ownership, and ownership increases the commitment of parents and students to the schools they choose. However, if equity and access are legitimate

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public policy goals the popular metaphor of the unregulated marketplace within which public and private schools compete for students and tax dollars on equal terms is inappropriate. No segment of our society can be abandoned to the vagaries of a system whose fundamental credo is "caveat emptor" — let the buyer beware."

6. School-communities.

Smart schools build smart communities and benefit from smart communities. Smart schools recognize that parents are first teachers and homes first classrooms. They offer parent education programs on topics ranging from prenatal care, helping students learn, and nutrition to stress reduction. They organize a preschool parent teacher organization as an adjunct to the regular PTA. But the relationship is reciprocal. Smart schools consider parents a valued resource in matters of school governance and policy development and in matters of teaching and learning.

7. Community service centers.

Smart schools become community service centers. Within them regular teaching occurs between 8 and 3 but the doors open earlier and stay open later. Though no two schools would offer identical services, some would house a day care center. Adult education classes in such subjects as English, aerobics, parenting, job hunting, self esteem and personal finances would be held. The playground would be open to the community. The cafeteria would be used for meetings and workshops. The library would include books on parenting. A medical clinic might be located on some school sites perhaps along with a clothes cooperative. Volunteers from the legal community might be there once a week offering free legal advice. The Boys Club and the YMCA might share facilities and sponsor programs on site. The churches in the school neighborhood might operate a family resource center that sponsors workshops for parents on child rearing, offers counseling and referral services to families, and houses a teenage pregnancy prevention program.

NEXT STEPS

Making San Antonio the city that puts families and children first and taking seriously our commitment to create smart schools requires both a change of attitude and a commitment to action. To generate the necessary political will we must first begin to talk to each other as a community and then act together as a community.

As a first step public and private institutions and agencies throughout San Antonio must make a collective commitment to help create a new San Antonio. This commitment must be followed by a careful inventory of resources, talents and interests to determine what role each institution and agency can play. Then, action plans must be developed to make this commitment a reality.

Collectively we call upon the major corporations, businesses, government and social agencies led by the United Way, the Chamber of Commerce, the mayor and city council and representatives of the professional medical community to establish in San Antonio a Ready to Learn Foundation. In cooperation with the education community this foundation would assume responsibility for coordinating and stimulating community wide efforts designed to ensure that by the year 2000 every student in San Antonio will come to school ready to learn. The United Way through its national "Mobilization for America's Children" program designed to promote learning readiness and other similar efforts is in a position to offer its experience to the success of such an effort. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching provides a model for organizing a Ready to Learn Foundation. One important role for such a foundation, according to Carnegie president Ernest Boyer, would be to develop a yardstick to measure San Antonio's commitment to young children and to prepare a periodic report card on how well the community is doing. He suggests that the report card seek answers to such questions as follows:

NEXT STEPS

☛ **Health:** How many of the community's mothers have adequate prenatal care? What is the percentage of low birthweight babies in the area? How many children receive the full range of immunizations? Are there Ready-to-Learn Clinics in the community to provide nutrition and health care, linking health and education?

Organizing a Ready to Learn Foundation

☛ **Parents:** Are parents reading to their children? Are there literacy programs available for parents who cannot read? Do all schools offer preschool parent education? Is a Ready-to-Learn Parent Guide available? Have preschool PTAs been formed in each community?

☛ **Preschool:** Do local Head Start programs reach all eligible children? Do all of the three- and four-year-olds have access to a preschool program? Are local schools working closely with Head Start to ensure continuity in learning? Does the community have adequate child-care facilities? Has the state developed adequate standards to ensure the quality of such programs? Does the local community college offer a degree program for preschool professionals?

☛ **Workplace:** Do employers provide parental leave? Are flexible scheduling and job sharing encouraged at the workplace? Are employees given "parenting days" each year? Is a child-care information and referral service available to workers?

☛ **Television:** Do local television stations air programs for preschoolers and their parents? Are community groups trained to monitor local stations, seeing to it that they meet the new FCC regulations? Are Ready-to-Learn Television Guides available to parents? Do local libraries and video stores stock high-quality videos for preschoolers?

NEXT STEPS

Organizing a Ready to Learn Foundation

☞ **Neighborhoods:** Does the community have outdoor and indoor parks for young children? Are "street playgrounds" needed? Are libraries, museums, and other learning centers adequately funded? And do they offer ready-to-learn programs? Do shopping malls and stores have Ready-to-Learn Centers? Are high school and college students organized to serve as volunteers in neighborhood children's programs?

☞ **Generations:** Do schools, day-care centers, and retirement villages bring the young and old together? Do day care centers and preschools have Grandteacher programs in which older people participate as mentors to young children? Does the community sponsor Grand Days that encourage intergenerational connections?

From: Ernest L. Bover, *Ready to Learn A Mandate for the Nation*, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1991.

We too commit ourselves to action. Through the Center for Educational Leadership and in partnership with our local school boards we will work to help each other develop action plans for restructuring following the design principles presented in this report.

We invite the mayor and city council, the San Antonio Coalition in Education and other America 2000 initiatives, to take a leadership role in the development of the Ready to Learn Foundation and to join the Center for Educational Leadership in its quest for "Smart Schools" for all of San Antonio's children. ☞

